



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION**

Governor Deval L. Patrick
EEA Secretary Maeve Vallely Bartlett
DCR Commissioner John P. Murray

Press Release Contacts: Bill Hickey - (617) 626-1453 or william.hickey@state.ma.us

DCR SELECTS CURATOR FOR HISTORIC GATEKEEPER'S HOUSE IN LOWELL

Historic Curatorship Program facilitates another public-private partnership

BOSTON – Thursday, October 9, 2014 - The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has chosen Kellin Matte as Curator of the historic Gatekeeper's House in Lowell Heritage State Park in Lowell. Under DCR's Historic Curatorship Program, curators agree to rehabilitate, manage and maintain historic properties in exchange for a long-term lease on the property.

"The Historic Curatorship program fosters a public/private partnership that benefits both the Commonwealth and the Curator," said DCR Commissioner John P. Murray. "Preservation of the properties ensures the future maintenance of these important historic resources and also provides long-term benefits to park visitors and nearby residents alike."

Established in 1994, the Historic Curatorship Program matches some of the Commonwealth's unused but significant historic buildings with parties interested in rehabilitating and maintaining the building in exchange for a long-term lease. Since the program's inception, more than \$16 million in private funds have been leveraged toward the long-term preservation of these important resources. To date, 20 properties have been rehabilitated or are currently under rehabilitation through the program, from the mountains of Berkshire County to the urban streets of Dorchester. Current uses for the properties include single-family homes, artist lofts, a nonprofit youth center, a mountaintop lodge, museums, and a wedding and events facility.

DCR's Historic Curatorship Program is one of only a handful of such programs in the country and is among the most successful, used as a model across the country. The program requires that the reuses of the properties be compatible with the surrounding community and enhance the visitor's experience of the park.

In the Fall of 2013, DCR solicited proposals for the reuse and lease of the house, and Mr. Matte was selected through an open and competitive process based on his contracting experience, passion for historic properties and the public benefit offered in his proposal. Mr. Matte will be designated as provisional lessee by DCR while a lease is developed and executed.

Mr. Matte is a local building professional from nearby Dracut with a range of experience in the construction industry, including the rehabilitation and repair of historic properties. In addition to restoring and maintaining the property in Lowell as a single family residence, the Curator intends to offer annual tours of the house, work with park staff and local non-profits to coordinate with local programs and events and work with DCR to install interpretive panels at the site.

The Gatekeeper's House & Barn were built in 1847 and was home to the gatekeeper of the Northern Canal Gatehouse. The property was owned by Lowell Locks and Dams for over a century until it came under the ownership of DCR in 1977. The Gatekeeper's House stands witness to the first point of control of the river that created Lowell and defines its integral role in the industrial history of the United States.

For more information on the Historic Curatorship Program, visit <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/cultural-resources/historic-curatorship-program.html>, send an email to HCP.Requests@state.ma.us, call 617-626-1361, or write to Historic Curatorship Program, Department of Conservation and Recreation, 7th floor, 251 Causeway St., Boston, MA 02114.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner John P. Murray, the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us

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251 Causeway Street, Suite 600, Boston, MA 02114 — (617) 626-1250 office / (617) 626-1351 (fax)